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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000628

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE DISCUSSES 24-POINT  
PLAN FOR STABILITY

REF: BAGHDAD 609

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4 (C) and (D).

11. (S//REL MNFI) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari called a Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS) meeting on February 26 with the Ambassador, UK Ambassador Patey, senior MNF-I officers, and top Iraqi national security staff to continue addressing the February 22 bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra. Discussion focused on the specifics and implementation of a GOI-compiled 24-point agenda (see para 12) as a political blueprint to ease tensions and restore stability. The agenda was based on the previous night's political advisory group meeting (reftel). Among the key deliverables are: a committee to review the status of those detained since February 22; an agreement to inspect and repair damaged mosques and to return those occupied since February 22 to their original administrators; a government offer to protect the holiest shrines as required; a determination of which victims of the sectarian strife are eligible for benefits as martyrs; and deployment of armored vehicles around cities to maintain stability. Embassy also pressed for enforcement of the GOI-prescribed weapons ban, but Jafari asked for more time to publicize the ban nation-wide. END SUMMARY.

12. (S//REL MNFI) Jafari convened the MCNS on February 26 to review the 24-point agenda proposed during the previous night's meeting of a broad-based political advisory group that had comprised political party and other leaders. Present at the MCNS meeting were the Ambassador, UK Ambassador Patey, MNF-I CG Casey, MNF-I DCG Houghton, Pol-Mil Counselor Litt, Minister of Defense Dulaime, Minister of Interior Jabr, Minister of National Security al-Anzi, and National Security Advisor Rubaie. See para 12 for a complete list of the 24 points; a review of the highlights appears below. (COMMENT: As with all MCNS meetings, the Sunni Arab political perspective was mostly absent given the heavily Shia political configuration of the national security apparatus. END COMMENT.)

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ADVISORY GROUP'S SUCCESS  
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13. (S//REL MNFI) Ambassador praised the political advisory group meeting. Jafari said its success is attributable to the breadth of participation and points of view expressed; to its results and recommendations; and to the positive impact the image of the meeting had on the populace. He thanked Ambassadors Khalilzad and Patey for generating the idea to hold such a meeting. Nevertheless, Jafari said, success will

only come with implementing its recommendations.

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POINT 2: REASSURING THE IRAQIS  
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¶4. (S//REL MNFI) The MCNS members concurred that the political parties, especially the two principal Sunni groups, have launched an important effort in their positive public statements and that these must continue.

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POINT 3: RELEASING DETAINEES  
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¶5. (S//REL MNFI) Much debate occurred about releasing detainees. After discussing the formation of a committee to determine releasability of detainees (e.g., whom the committee should comprise, whether there should be an amnesty/unconditional release, which group of detainees are to be considered), the MCNS reached consensus to augment the current Combined Review and Release Board (CRRB) (composed of nine members, the majority of whom are Iraqis) by two new members: representatives of the Sunni Tawaffuq group and Mithal al Alussi's party. Jafari imposed three conditions on this board's members, especially the political party members: information revealed during the board's deliberations must not be made public; the inevitable internal disagreements and disputes of the board must not be discussed with the media; and each party is obliged to contribute information relevant to a given detainee not already available in the files to which they might be privy. This expanded CRRB would only review the files of the approximately 100 people detained

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since February 22. The board would identify the detainees as falling into two categories: those to be released (either having been detained unlawfully or detained legally but without prosecutable evidence or posing a security threat) and those to be maintained under detention (those who are prosecutable and those who pose a security threat but are not necessarily prosecutable). The Ambassador suggested the government might consider extending the mandate of this board if the model proves successful. In that case, another category would apply -- those whom Iraq might agree to release under one set of circumstances, but not under others.

These people could be part of an amnesty program. All agreed that unconditional amnesty is premature. (COMMENT: The modalities of the new board's deliberations will have to be worked out to ensure compliance with Iraqi law and UNSCR ¶1647. END COMMENT)

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POINT 4: DAMAGED AND OCCUPIED MOSQUES  
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¶6. (S//REL MNFI) Jafari announced the formation of a committee comprising representatives of the Sunni and Shia foundations (waqf) and the Council of Ministers that will inspect mosques that were damaged or destroyed during the recent violence. Mosques that were damaged during the current violence would be repaired or rebuilt. Those seized unlawfully as a result of the crisis would be returned, but those mosques whose ownership has been under dispute since before the crisis would be dealt with separately. Dulaime reported the case of one mosque (Masjid an-Nida') seized by the government and in which the Iraqi Security Force (ISF) found Saddamist propaganda, evidence of a military operations room, and a medical clinic used to treat insurgents.

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SHIA EVICTIONS  
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¶7. (S//REL MNFI) A discussion ensued about the imminent

problem of dozens of Shia families evicted from their homes in predominantly Sunni neighborhoods (especially Abu Ghraib, Daura, and Shu'la) who are seeking to enter the International Zone for refuge. Jafari and Dulaime stressed the importance of returning these people to their homes and halting these evictions immediately, lest Shia neighborhoods begin to retaliate against Sunni families. MOI explained that many of these families were not driven away at gunpoint but rather received credibly threatening letters demanding that they leave. Since other families ignoring such threats had been killed, he added, these victims needed no additional warning.

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POINT 5: DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES  
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¶8. (S//REL MNFI) Jafari reiterated the importance of deploying forces into "hot" or sensitive areas without delay and announcing such deployments publicly. Casey, Dulaime, and Jabr stated that beginning February 27 mechanized/armored vehicles would be deployed visibly around the cities, especially in mixed Shia/Sunni areas. Casey also asked for, and received, confirmation that the vehicle ban in Baghdad would be lifted February 27. Finally, Casey emphasized the importance of enforcing the government's weapons ban immediately, although some violence should be expected as a result, especially from the Jaysh al Mahdi. Jafari urged that first the ban first be publicized broadly over the course of a few days. MOI Jabr added that he has begun a campaign to ask political party leaders to inform their organizations about the ban. Jafari tried to argue for an interim weapons buy-back program before enforcement of the ban, but Casey persuaded him that a buy-back program is premature. (COMMENT: The weapons ban was not part of the 24-point plan but was prescribed earlier by the GOI. END COMMENT.)

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POINT 20: PROTECTING HOLY SHRINES  
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¶9. (S//REL MNFI) Jafari warned that destruction of another major religious site could plunge Iraq into civil war. As a result, Jabr said he will meet with the religious leadership

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of all sides regarding the requirements to protect their holiest shrines, especially if they have evidence of threats. In the longer term, Jafari suggested creating a security force with a mandate to protect holy sites. UK Ambassador Patey observed that such a government offer of security would shift some responsibility to the shoulders of the religious foundations to determine for themselves what assistance they require.

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POINT 21: HONORING MARTYRS  
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¶10. (S//REL MNFI) The issue of determining "martyrdom" as a result of the violence is important for the government to provide benefits to families of victims. Jafari said the same committee working the mosque inspections also could decide whether the deceased is a terrorist/foreign fighter and thus ineligible, or is an innocent party and thus a martyr eligible for assistance. The PM acknowledged that there would be many difficult cases to decide.

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POINT 22: RECONSTRUCTION DONATIONS  
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¶11. (S//REL MNFI) Jafari observed that sharia law actually complicates the procedures for collecting donations for reconstruction of damage or other loss. Donations offered for a particular fund, he explained, may be spent only on

that project and may not be diverted to another cause or project for any reason. Jafari expressed Iraq's profound appreciation for President Bush's and HMG's offers to contribute to rebuilding the Samarra mosque. The Shia religious leadership prefers to reconstruct the mosque themselves, he said, but the US/UK offers (and those of other nations and organizations) might be used for reconstruction around the mosque.

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24-Point Plan  
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¶12. (U) The following is Embassy's unofficial translation of the 24 points raised during the political advisory group meeting on February 25, collated by the PM and distributed at the February 26 MCNS meeting:

- ¶1. Political initiative is the solution
  - ¶2. Public announcement reassuring all Iraqis
  - ¶3. Releasing detainees
  - ¶4. Return of occupied mosques
  - ¶5. Consideration of proper deployment of Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police in Shia and Sunni areas
  - ¶6. Application of martial law
  - ¶7. Condemning terrorism
  - ¶8. Detentions under law and approved by a judge
  - ¶9. Addressing extremist imams in mosques
  - ¶10. Form investigative committee
  - ¶11. Avoiding exaggeration of facts
  - ¶12. National Honor Charter
  - ¶13. Joint review of detainee folders by MOI and MOD
  - ¶14. Consult with neighboring nations
  - ¶15. Regularly conduct outreach meetings
  - ¶16. Follow the rule of law
  - ¶17. Increase number of judges
  - ¶18. Apply anti-terrorist laws
  - ¶19. Use of curfews
  - ¶20. Protect holy shrines
  - ¶21. Consider the dead as martyrs
  - ¶22. Donation-collection committee
  - ¶23. Conclusion statement
  - ¶24. Execute the Cabinet plan
- KHALILZAD